Important Advances in Clinical Medicine

Epitomes of Progress -- Plastic Surgery

The Scientific Board of the California Medical Association presents the following inventory of items of progress in Plastic Surgery. Each item, in the judgment of a panel of knowledgeable physicians, has recently become reasonably firmly established, both as to scientific fact and important clinical significance. The items are presented in simple epitome and an authoritative reference, both to the item itself and to the subject as a whole is generally given for those who may be unfamiliar with a particular item. The purpose is to assist the busy practitioner, student, research worker or scholar to stay abreast of these items of progress in Plastic Surgery which have recently achieved a substantial degree of authoritative acceptance, whether in his own field of special interest or another.

The items of progress listed below were selected by the Advisory Panel to the Section on Plastic Surgery of the California Medical Association and the summaries were prepared under its direction.

Recent Advances in Microsurgery

The transplantation of tissue by microsurgical techniques is gradually evolving from an experimental laboratory technique to a clinical procedure. Over the past several years, numerous workers have demonstrated that large blocks of composite tissue can be transplanted on reanastomosed small vessels and nerves. The rat's leg, kidney and the liver have all been successfully transplanted or reimplanted. Small island flaps have also been transplanted from the abdomen to the neck in rats. The rabbit's ear has been transplanted and reimplanted on numerous occasions, and digits and toes have been transposed and transplanted in monkeys. The recent successful replantation of an amputated thumb by Tamai in Japan attests the clinical applicability of these techniques. Cobbett of England electively transplanted a human toe to the hand, opening up a new field of clinical digital reconstruction. Several workers have attempted to transplant large composite flaps in humans, with variable success. Once the proper donor areas have been delineated, immediate flap transplantation from one area of the body to another should become a clinical fact. Many problems must be solved in the field of instrumentation

Reprint requests to: Division of Scientific and Educational Activities, 693 Sutter Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94102.